



Indiana Department of Education

Dr. Katie Jenner, Secretary of Education

Foreign Exchange Students and English Learner Status

Under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), a foreign exchange student is not exempt from any Title III required assessment, including English language proficiency assessments (i.e., WIDA). The English learner (EL) identification and placement process must be completed within the first 30 calendar days of the beginning of the school year or within two weeks for students who enroll later in the school year. See the [Indiana EL Identification and Placement Guidance](#) for detailed information.

Local Education Agencies (LEAs) are required to administer a Home Language Survey (HLS) to all students enrolling in Indiana for the first time. Any student, including a foreign exchange student, with a language other than English indicated on the HLS must be administered the appropriate placement assessment (i.e., Kindergarten W-APT or WIDA Screener).

Please note that this policy applies even if the student's foreign exchange program requires an English language proficiency assessment apart from a WIDA Screener. Under compliance with ESSA, as a part of the state's standardized entrance procedures, only WIDA placement assessments can be utilized to identify EL students in Indiana. Other assessments do not align to the WIDA English Language Development Standards, nor do scores that are considered proficient by a foreign exchange program necessarily correlate with Indiana's entrance criteria.

A foreign exchange student who scores 4.9 or below on WIDA Screener is formally identified as an English learner (EL) in Indiana, and the following must occur:

- An Individual Learning Plan (ILP) must be developed and implemented.
- The foreign exchange student begins receiving English language development services.
- The Annual Parent Notification Letter is sent to the host family and parent/guardian.
- The foreign exchange student participates in the annual WIDA ACCESS assessment, if enrolled during the test window.

All foreign exchange students enrolled on October 1 must be reported as Language Minority (LM) for purposes of allocating funds under 3114(a) of the ESEA. Due to their immigrant status, this includes reporting foreign exchange students who are Native English Speakers (NES) and indicated English only on the HLS.

For more information, contact:

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